

CIA Ignored Bans on Drug Tests And Destroyed Data, Probe Says

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The Central Intelligence Agency continued its secret use of LSD and other drugs on unsuspecting subjects for years after it knew that the practice violated federal law and individual rights, the Senate intelligence committee concluded yesterday.

The committee blamed the CIA for a failure of leadership control in permitting drug tests on unsuspecting people to continue for 10 years after they had caused at least one suicide.

Even those responsible for the death of Frank Olson, who took LSD unwittingly, were never reprimanded as the Rockefeller Commission report on the CIA had asserted last year, the committee said.

The committee's final report on foreign intelligence cites several examples of a lack of internal control over the drug experiments, which were described as "unethical and illicit" in an agency official's memorandum written in 1957—six years before the tests were halted.

The report cited instances in which a CIA director was not briefed on the LSD experiments, direct instructions by high-level officials were ignored, and documents were destroyed in an unusual fashion that buried forever details of LSD tests.

The CIA began to experiment with LSD and other chemicals in the early 1950s, intending to use them in interrogation of prisoners and other forms of behavior con-

trol. For years, the agency authorized tests in which unsuspecting persons in this country were given LSD to test their responses.

"It was deemed imperative that these programs be concealed from the American people," the committee concluded, quoting the following lines from a memo written in 1957 by the CIA's inspector general:

"Precautions must be taken not only to protect operations from exposure to enemy forces but also to conceal these activities from the American public in general. The knowledge that the Agency is engaging in unethical and illicit activities would have serious repercussions in political and diplomatic circles and would be detrimental to the accomplishment of its mission."

The committee noted irregularities in CIA internal control both before and after the death of Olson, who leaped from a New York hotel window a few days after a CIA official had put 70 micrograms of LSD in his glass of Cointreau in November, 1953.

Six months before Olson's death, Richard Helms, then an assistant director in the agency, described LSD as "dynamite" and instructed aides that he was to be informed when it was used on a subject.

Simultaneously, another official, Frank Wisner, instructed the chemical testing staff to use LSD only on his personal approval. However, the Olson experiment proceeded without clearance

from either Helms or Wisner, the Senate report said.

After the death, then-CIA director Allen Dulles sent memos criticizing both the official who conducted the experiment and the one who approved it, accusing them of ignoring medical safeguards.

Last year, the Rockefeller Commission report on the CIA called these memos "reprimands." But the Senate committee found that the two officials were told the notes were not reprimands and that no adverse notations were being made in their personnel files.

The committee was particularly critical of the destruction in 1973 of practically all of the documents describing a program—code-named MK/ULTRA—that embraced most of the chemical-testing projects.

Helms approved destroying the documents at the request of Sidney Gottlieb, who was director of the Technical Services Division and the man who supervised the experiment in which Olson died, the Senate report said.

Helms told the committee in secret session last September that he agreed to the destruction partly because non-CIA personnel had been involved. "... Since the program was over and finished and done with, we thought we would just get rid of the files as well, so that anybody who assisted us in the past would not be subject to follow up or questions, embarrassment, if you will."